Davis & Dawson E-5 (1923-1940) 1945
NU31 Serl NU31

425 Blanco, whose son was only sixteen years
458 old, bought outright for him a little girl of
six years.

When contracts for fish were secured by
621 the Mexicans from American markets in

[p. 267(B)]

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940) 1945
NU31 Seri NU31

621 about 1932–3, the exploitation of the teeming waters of the Gulf was rapid, and the village of Kino suddenly appeared on the bay by that name where there had been nothing but Seri jacals before. Today there

[p. 267(c)]

[text continues on p. 268(B)]

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940) 1965
MU31 Seri MU31

●621 are four or five hundred people there, more during the peak of the season, and some fifty or more wattle and daub shacks arranged without plan or order, facing at every angle, but all near the beach on which the fishing boats land and are pulled up on shore. Refrigerated trucks carry fifteen to twenty-five tons of fish away daily during the height of the season, mostly the huge endemic totuava (Fig. 21). These great fish are dragged from the boats and lined up on the shore, where the heads are chopped off and the entrails are pulled out and left to be carried away by the tides or consumed by hundreds of [131] scavenger gulls of the beach. A quarter mile north of Kino is the present-day Seri village where nearly all the Seris now live semi-permanently because of the easy money and [439] living. They have their own boats, fish a little for profit, and also bake the discarded [262] fish heads for food. The Seri dwellings are now scarcely inferior to many of the wattle 342 and daub shacks of the Mexicans. Indeed, many of the Mexican shacks are built by [439] Seris in exchange for manta cloth or food.

[p. 268(B)]

[89 cont.]

000 abundant flying and, especially, marine fauna.

For a modern technology, their region has great resources,
511 but for the culture of the Seri it is frankly inhospitable. The standard of living is exceedingly low, as is proclaimed by natives and foreigners and as is demonstrated by the illnesses and hunger that weaken the population.

[90] The Seri truly form part of our Western society, in
226 so far as they catch fish, with fishhooks and motorboats, to sell
439 in the markets of Hermosillo, Nogales, and Tucson, and they
[177] obtain payments in national specie and coin. The part that
182 they form, however, has its own internal structure, which regulates the relations with the environment and among its mem-
[161] bers, even though a group of 218 persons, which suffers severe alterations in percentages from disasters like the sinking of a boat or strokes of good luck like the establishment of a prosperous fishing camp, is almost insignificant for the nation.

Most probably they have never been much more numerous, and they must not have had great cohesion in the past, a situation explicable in view of their nomadic gathering economy.
● 621 Toward the close of the 18th century they were divided into bands, of which it is known that the most important were the Guaymas, Upanguaymas, Tepocas, Tiburones, and Salineros.
[648] They banded together at various times in order to defend themselves and to attack the nuclei of Mexicans of the zone, achieving combined action, but without effective political unity.

At present they seem to form a single group without marked
619 subdivisions, although they recognize affiliations like that of "Tiburones," "half-Papago," etc., which appear to have little real classificatory significance.

There is great uniformity: they speak a single language
184 incomprehensible to the rest of humanity; they have a relatively
619 uniform culture, and there is tribal unification for matters involving sexual exchange.

The most obvious relations are spatial; they have important
361 settlements that sprung up around the fishing establishments and are more or less permanently occupied. Of these, "El Desemboque," close to the mouth of a river from which they have been displaced, is the most important, with 80 per cent of the Seri

[90 cont.]

361 population. There is an obvious separation there between the
563 Seri and the yori, or non-Seri, with manifest differences in cultural patterns.

The yori occupy an extensive area per person; their homes are quite distant from one another, and four families in conjunction occupy a belt of land of about 100 by 50 meters.

361 The Seri are grouped by families, inhabiting minute squares of from one and a half to two meters to a side. The yori
182 feeling of prestige, based on the territorial expanse of their prop-
361 erty, contrasts with the feeling of security based on personal
511 contact that dominates many aspects of Seri life; the small size of the Seri habitation indicates, not a low standard of living, but a distinct [91] concept of comfort, according to which the Seri, having all the desert to live in, like the yori, confine themselves to the limits that personal contact permits.

In January, 1952, there were 35 dwellings, with an aver-
592 age of 4.6 persons in each, those lodging four, five, and six persons frankly predominating. Each three or four more closely related families occupied contiguous homes, forming relatively separate conjunctions by themselves, which we might call
596 macrofamilies.

The family is the basic Seri institution, which is manifest in all aspects of life: it is the center of production, co-operation, the division of labor, education, diversion, government, etc.

582 Going beyond the family and macrofamily organization,
619 we have a tribal structure based on the generalized exchange (2)
●621

2. Lévy Strauss, Les Structures élémentaires de la Parenté [Elementary Kinship Structures], Paris, 1949.

of members for concluding marriage, by which all the Seri are actually linked by consanguinity or affinity. One is almost able to include all the members of the tribe on a single genealogical chart, systematically excluding only some few outsiders who have penetrated the group.

582 This situation, which would make one think of a primitive

[91 cont.]

582 promiscuity of gatherers corroborative of the ideas of Morgan, is very far from being simple, tending more to confirm the ideas of Kirchoff regarding the greater restriction and regulation of marital relations in societies having a rudimentary economy. In all Seri marriages close consanguineous relatives seem to be avoided. More precisely, a classification of relatives is estab-
582 lished, from which only one group can provide a spouse. To
● 621 differentiate the Seri system from clan systems and marital
601 classes, in which each member belongs to a fixed class in relation to all the other members, in this system the classification varies with respect to the position of each person, that is to say, it is a true system of kinship. The factors of sex, polarity, generation, relative age, affinity, and consanguinity are involved in it, acting to deny or permit the possibility of marriage. Perhaps because of the small size of the Seri group, only within which are marriages concluded, the kinship system results in a clear identification of all persons by terms that are functions of marital relationships: approximately 50 per cent are excluded for being of the [92] same sex; 30 per cent for being of a distinct generation (very few aged or very young); the consanguineous relatives close to the affinal relatives and married persons are also excluded, leaving only so many persons as possible mates, a situation that is reflected in the kinship terminology.

582 It is not that sexual relations may be prohibited, for
[837] there is relative freedom in extramarital, including prenuptial,
[836] sexual relations, but the "marriage" association, sanctioned by the society and for which there is strong community pressure, has the limitations mentioned. And it tends to be realized, in spite of the disadvantages of the disappearance of sexual liberty, avoidance of near affinal relatives, and the economic obligations that begin upon the conclusion of the marriage.

156 With regard to individual development, this social struc-
155 ture is of such nature that it has well integrated cultural elements that create a very special personality, characterized by improvidence, emotional instability, inconstancy, and feelings of security, dispossession, and dependence.

11: Moser L-5 (1956-1961) 1963
NU31 Seri NU31

SERI BANDS

EDWARD MOSER

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Mr. Moser, of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, holds a Master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Pennsylvania. He has been doing research on the Seri language during trips to Sonora since 1952.

ABSTRACT

105 621 642 614 [178] In previous publications on the Seri, frequent reference to distinct Seri groups points to historical tribal divisions at some level. Recent research among the Seri has determined the former existence of six bands which included three dialect groups. Three of the bands were subdivided into clans. These six bands, whose formation may have been caused largely by internal struggles, were eventually crushed and reduced to a single group by the devastation brought about by external conflict.

INTRODUCTION

101 131 [161] 178 621 642 121 621 642 The Seri tribe is located in Mexico along the coast of Sonora between Bahia Kino and Puerto Libertad, and on Tiburon Island (Fig. 1). Today it consists of approximately two hundred and eighty persons who call themselves *kongkaak*[1] "the people." Although at one time it was comprised of six distinct bands (Fig. 2), the tribe has now lost its band organization. However, much of the late history of these now-defunct tribal units remains vivid in the minds of the Seri. The purpose of this paper is to present some of the salient features of these former bands, to discuss certain interrelations between them, and to recount the Seri version of the disintegration of the band system.[2]

114 Three published studies on the Seri should be mentioned.[3] Of these, the reports by Kroeber and by Griffen are the more reliable. All three investigators mention tribal divisions which Griffen rightly designates as bands.

BANDS

642 101 131 BAND I *xika ?ai kkoii* "they who live toward the true wind"

This group is commonly referred to in the literature as the Tepoca or Salinero. As shown on Fig. 1, they inhabited an area which extended from a point slightly north of Puerto Lobos to Punta Tepopa on the south. The territory extended inland, encompassing the general area delimited by the San Ignacio River.

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Dialect 3 was spoken by Band VI. This dialect, which is also extinct, is described by the informants as musical and is referred to as "singing talk." Expressions which are recalled are characterized by sharp pitch contours and heavy stress. Several grammatical constructions from this dialect have been found to contain morphemes unknown to present-day speakers.

The elicitable utterances and expressions of dialects 2 and 3 appear to employ the same segmental phonemes as present-day Seri.

BAND SUBDIVISIONS

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Three of the six bands were subdivided. The territorial subdivisions of those three, Bands I, III, and VI are shown on Figs. 3-5.

Band I

Band I became divided into six groups, each group occupying a subdivision of the band territory. Each such subdivision was called an *i?iziiting*. The name of the most prominent camp in each *i?iziiting* was generally used also as the name of that subdivision. The names of these subdivisions are;[4]

zaah ?akaila	"(arrows) shot at the cliff"
pailk ?aokwot	"driftwood huts"
xpano ?ax	"fresh water in the sea"
?aasixp	"white mesquite"
?axwoli?om	"place of clams"
xapoya?	"sea lion . . ."

Band III

This band became subdivided into fifteen groups, named as follows;

?ah?ax	"whichever water"
kiazin	"long and narrow"
sakpatix	"_____"
?aank	"clam (species of)"
?atkisa	"rotten testicle"
taih it	"willow trunk"
inoo?kw kixax	"rattling stone bay"
xnitzk	"facing the wind"
takata	"_____"
?eeme	"camp"
?ast ?ax	"stone point (of arrow)"
sosnitaa	"in front of Alcatraz Island"
xoxaokl	"the large ones"
kail iti ktamkw	"men of the dry lake bed"
?ax ipak	"the other side of the water"

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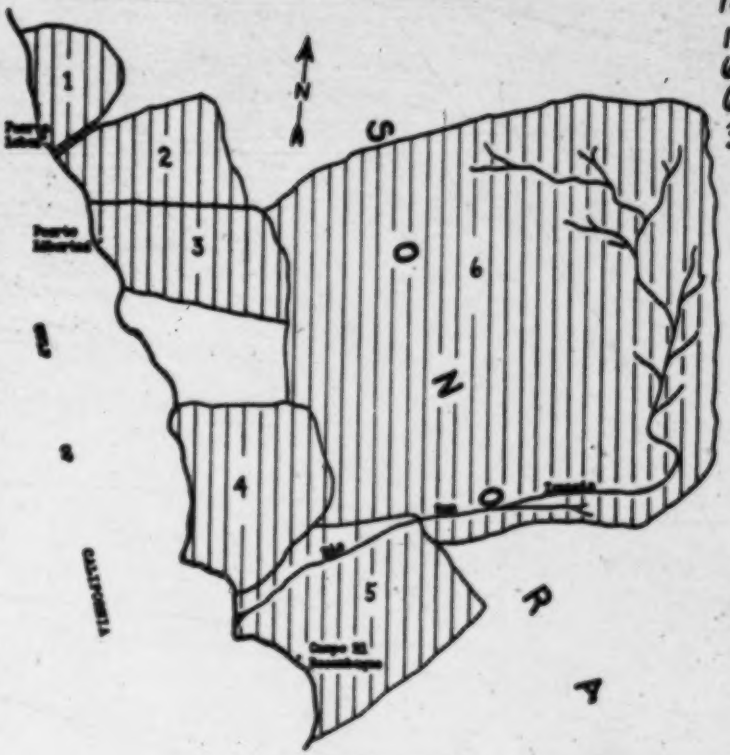

FIG. 3. Subdivisions of Band I

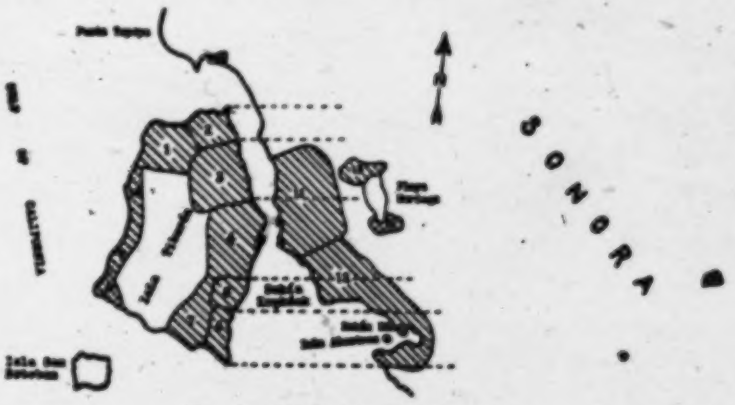

FIG. 4. Subdivisions of Band III

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621 Little information could be elicited about subdivisions 7, 8, 9, and 10. The reason for this might be that Band VI was slow in [169] [688] abandoning those coastal areas (if it actually did inhabit them) as it was being displaced by Bands III and IV.

621 The Seri say that long ago several men, called *ʔant iʔakimhoh* 642 "they who explain the land," came to Tiburon Island and told the 173 people along the eastern shore that they owned also a corre- 425 sponding strip of land on the mainland. Thus the inhabitants of 167 subdivisions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 laid claim to the coastal areas directly across the channel from them as shown by the dotted lines on Fig. 4. They assumed that their new territories extended inland [822] to include as much terrain as they chose to claim. At first the people went to their mainland areas primarily to gather cactus fruit. Eventually some of them remained on the mainland and established subdivisions 11 and 12. This establishment superseded the claims of the five Tiburon Island subdivisions to their main- [101] land territories. Although the mainland subdivisions 11 and 12 formed, in some respects, a separate band in their own right, they retained their name, *taʔeowkw kongkaak* "the people of Tiburon Island." Eventually this group returned to Tiburon.

621 Of subdivisions 13 and 14 which are shown on Fig. 4, very 642 little is known. The people of subdivision 13 inhabited an area 131 encompassing the northern end of the dry lake, La Playa Noriega [829] (San Bartolo). Some of the Seri believe that these people were [172] giants. Although in this area I have found clay figurines and other [173] artifacts common to abandoned camps elsewhere, the Seri do not know the names of the camps of this subdivision. Subdivision 14 occupied the area surrounding the southern end of the same dry lake.

Subdivision 15 occupied the general area which is now Villa de Seris, a settlement on the southern edge of Hermosillo. As [167] Hermosillo grew, it became increasingly difficult for these Seri to maintain their customary way of life, and they eventually returned to Tiburon Island.

642 BAND VI

621 Band VI became divided into four subdivisions, the names of 101 which are:

ɤnitom	"_____"
pahii	"flint"
kofte okl ifa	"large iguana peninsula"
koiih	"tubular"

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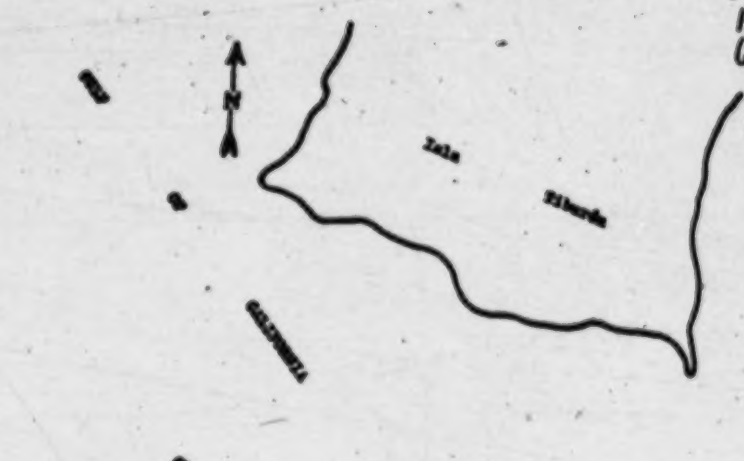

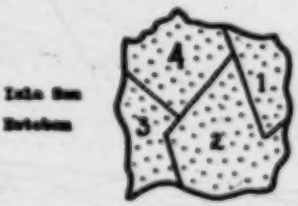

FIG. 8. Subdivisions of Band VI

BAND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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The social structure of the bands can be properly understood only in relation to the social structure of their smaller units, the i?iziitaxag. The kin group which resided in and dominated each such subdivision constituted a clan.[5] This group conforms to Murdock's three major specifications for clan designation.[6]

Murdock's first specification states that a kin group, to constitute a clan, must be based explicitly on a unilinear rule of descent. The kin group of each Seri band subdivision was based on patrilineal descent. An individual was closely associated with the group of kinsmen of his subdivision, all of whom were related to him through males only. The father was the head of his household. For example, he assumed leadership in marriage negotiations. Upon his death, the eldest son took his place.

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The second specification states that such a kin group must have residential unity. Seri marriages were exogamous with respect to the subdivision,[7] and the rule of residence was patrilocal. The domicile was set up near the home of the groom's parents.

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642 621 418 714 [186] [406]

The third specification states that a kin group, to constitute a clan, must exhibit actual social integration. Murdock stresses the necessity of observing a positive group sentiment, such as would be manifested by organized collective activities or group functions, before the group can be characterized as a clan. An essential feature of this group sentiment is the inclusion of the wife as an integral member of her husband's kin group.

621 618 [628] [622] [701] [583] [406]

This sort of social integration was indeed exhibited by the Seri kin group of each subdivision. It was, in fact, fostered by the isolation brought about by the inhabitants' reservation of hunting and fishing rights for themselves. Tension existed between certain subdivisions and, since there was no chief, the oldest capable male organized and led the fighting force of the clan. In times of need, the members of the group united to give mutual assistance. The groom-to-be could expect material aid from his fellow clan members in the payment of the bride price. Mutual assistance was given in the fulfillment of puberty ceremony and burial obligations. The men cooperated in their hunting and fishing expeditions. The women of the clan, including the in-married spouses, cooperated in the gathering and sharing of food. Everyone could attend the various fiestas. It is said that in the performance of these collective activities, close harmony generally prevailed.

BAND INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

642 619 578 [648]

The division of the Seri tribe into bands was likely brought about through internal strife. During the period of band history known to the present-day Seri,[8] however, serious skirmishes seem to have been fought predominantly with non-Seri groups.[9]

BAND I

642 621 628 578 [721] [648]

Band I internal relations appear to have been relatively peaceful. The inhabitants of subdivisions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were fishermen as well as hunters and gatherers, whereas the people of subdivision 6 preferred to subsist on gathered food and wild game. Also, the members of Band I robbed cattle and horses, which pursuit brought reprisals from the Mexican ranchers. There was apparently considerable social intercourse among the six subdivisions, even to the extent that hunting rights of one were sometimes granted to inhabitants of a neighboring section.

Trouble developed when some members of Band I speared fish within the domain of Band V. Here also bitter fighting broke out, and any semblance of peaceful co-existence between the two groups was destroyed.

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Except for the occurrence of several battles, relations between Bands I and III were peaceful.

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Relations with non-Seri groups were not always peaceful. For many years the members of Band I were on friendly terms with the Papago; they often camped together and even intermarried. Due to a misunderstanding,[10] fighting erupted between the two groups and many people were killed in the years which followed.

BAND II

The external relations of Band II were decidedly turbulent. Although their primary base of operations was a coastal area, the people did not use the ocean as a source of food. They preferred beef and horse meat which was easily acquired by stealing animals from ranches. Here again the wrath of the ranchers and the government was incurred.

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[721]

A small group of Yaqui eventually joined Band II and intermarried with them. The Seri claim that the Yaqui induced the warriors of this band to assault travelers on the road between Hermosillo and Guaymas. Coyote Iguana, who according to Seri tradition captured Lola Casanova, was of this band. This activity soon brought retribution from the government. Later, dissension arose between these Seri and the Yaqui.

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The enmity and strife that occurred between Bands II and V were mentioned above.

BAND III

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The history of the internal relations of this band on Tiburon Island seems to have been marked by periods of violence. Battles between subdivisions sometimes occurred; however, they were usually short-lived and soon forgotten. A major struggle once occurred when a shaman named *?apetla* "the invincible one" and warriors from subdivision 4 made repeated raids upon the neighboring subdivisions and killed many. Eventually, his enemies overcame their fear and destroyed the killer.

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Although the inhabitants of Band III were hunters, gatherers, and fishermen, they began to rob cattle once they became established on the mainland. They too incurred the wrath of ranchers and the government.

BAND IV

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Since the members of this band were, by choice, inhabiting an inland area of Tiburon Island, they lived in relative isolation as hunters and gatherers. Their primary contacts were with members of Band III with whom they intermarried.

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Band V

642 These people were apparently hunters, gatherers, and fishermen. It is said that they speared fish from the shore since they did not use balsas. They too apparently raided the ranches. Their warring nature has already been discussed; it resulted in the acquisition of few friends. However, several marriages between members of this band and members of subdivision 2 of Band III are said to have occurred.

Band VI

The members of Band VI lived on San Esteban Island and were the most primitive of the tribe. They lived in huts made of driftwood and in caves and made extensive use of the balsa. Although they did not have the bow and arrow, they did become expert in the use of the spear. The people depended mainly on a seafood, iguana, and maguey diet.

Perhaps it was due to the confined living space on the small island with the accompanying lack of fresh water that relations between the four subdivisions were precarious and fights broke out frequently. The Seri today stress the fact that the members of this band were impetuous and unpredictable.

642 Their relations with the other bands were generally good however. Seri from Band III were free to visit San Esteban where they were well treated.

The San Esteban people seldom traveled to the mainland, and, since they spoke no Spanish, it is probable that they made no peaceful contact with non-Seri groups.

COLLAPSE OF THE BAND SYSTEM

642 628 578 648 Internal strife in the Seri tribe was probably a major factor in the establishment of the band system. External strife was a major factor in its downfall.

Reference has been made to the plundering, killings and rustling of cattle to which certain of the bands were dedicated. The concern of the Sonora government was aroused, and steps were taken to crush the rebellious groups. According to the present-day Seri, military action by army units and rancher outfits against the various bands resulted in the near-destruction of the whole tribe.[11]

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the vessel to Guaymas. With the aid of a group of Yaqui, some of these women were said to have been permitted to go to Hermosillo and eventually to return to their home on Tiburon. Others of their group are said to have remained near Guaymas. The women who returned to Tiburon reported that the San Esteban women and children were put aboard another ship which sailed southward.

BANDS I, III, AND IV

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As opposition from the Papago and government forces increased, the members of Band I were forced to seek refuge on Tiburon Island. The mainland members of Band III (subdivisions 11 and 12) were also forced, especially during the Encinas Wars, to flee to Tiburon. There the combined forces of Bands I, III, and IV sought to cope with the military expeditions sent out through the years to exterminate them. Tiburon Island is an adverse battlefield for the uninitiated; some expeditions were turned back due to lack of potable water or because of failure to make contact with the enemy in the mountainous terrain. Some expeditions did encounter the Seri, however, and many natives were either killed or captured.

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Through the years, then, these military encounters, along with smallpox and measles epidemics, were responsible for reducing the Seri tribe to a small remnant. The band and clan systems lost their functional relevance as the people continued to live together for mutual protection. Shortly after the turn of the century, the expeditions and raids had practically ceased.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF BANDS TODAY

With the dissolution of the band system, the rule of descent shifted from patrilineal to bilateral, and the rule of residence shifted from patrilocal to neolocal.

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Although the substance of the band system is no longer a reality, the concept of land ownership still remains. A young Seri of today may choose to be associated with either the i?iriiting of his father or that of his mother. He is said to inherit part ownership of the area. It is recalled by one informant that in former times ownership of a mountain was especially important. Sometimes ownership of a mountain was included as part payment for a bride. Thus a person might 'own' a mountain in a subdivision other than his own.

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A custom exists even today whereby a person names his dog after a mountain or other geographical point located in his subdivision. Although the person may re-use the name, each dog so named must be of the same sex as the first.

so named must be of the same sex as the first. The significance of land ownership needs further investigation.

Many of the Seri still prefer, when possible, to live in their chosen band area. Sometimes a person, when he is approaching death, will ask to be taken to his own i?iziiting, where he can die and be buried in the area of his choice.

NOTES

1. Due to printing limitations, stress on Seri words has been omitted, and several orthographic symbol changes have been made for this paper. The phonetic values of the symbols used are the following: p is voiceless labial stop; t is vl. dental stop; k is vl. velar stop; ? is glottal stop; ƒ is vl. labial flat spirant; ʍ is vl. labial grooved-rounded spirant; s is vl. alveolar spirant; z is vl. alveo-palatal spirant; l is vl. lateral spirant; ĥ is vl. velar spirant; x is vl. back velar spirant; m is labial nasal; n is dental nasal; ng is velar nasal; y is palatal semivowel; i is a high close front vowel; e is a low close front vowel; a is a low open central vowel; o is a mid close back vowel.

2. These data were compiled during field trips to the Seri camps during the years 1956-61, the studies being carried out under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The principal informant was R. Herrera T. whose information was checked with and supplemented by nine of the older members of the tribe. I am indebted to my colleague, David Thomas, who read an earlier draft of this paper and made helpful suggestions.

3. 1) W. J. McGee, "The Seri Indians," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report*, No. 17, Part 1. Washington, 1898. 2) A. L. Kroeber, "The Seri," *Southwest Museum Papers*, No. 6. Los Angeles, 1931. 3) W. B. Griffen, "Notes on Seri Indian Culture, Sonora, Mexico," *Latin American Monograph Series*, No. 10. Gainesville, 1959.

4. It will be noted that between subdivision 3 and 4 on Fig. 3 there is an unnumbered area, the status of which is uncertain.

5. Kroeber states that McGee's concept of Seri maternal lineages crystallized into totemic clans with matron rule seem a fantasy. In Kroeber's opinion, "The Seri may never have had sibs or clans; but the fact that they appear to lack them now is no positive evidence that they were without them three centuries ago. Shifts of residence, contraction of territory, shrinkage of numbers, amalgamation of distinct bands, may well have obliterated much of such social fabric as they once possessed."

Griffen discusses the nature of the former Seri bands and states, "they may have been patrilineal and exogamous. The criteria . . . that Julian Steward has exposited for the formation of exogamous, patrilineal bands . . . are and presumably would have been met formerly in the Seri habitat." Griffen lists other aspects of this type of band which are also verified to some extent by his data. From reading his material, it is obvious that he suspects the existence of clans at some earlier period. He emphasizes the need for further investigation.

6. G. P. Murdock, *Social Structure*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1949.

7. Marriages were usually contracted within the band.

8. As Kroeber points out, their memory likely covers only the latter part of the period of Spanish contacts.

9. The Seri recall nothing of Seri-Pima contacts and little of Seri-Apache relations.

10. The story is related that one day some Seri entered a cave where they found several Papago jugs filled with seeds. Being hungry, the people ate the seeds and left some arrows as token payment. The Seri say that the Papago apparently believed the arrows were intended as an insult. Fighting broke out soon afterward.

11. The Seri concept of the band annihilations is seen to be in contradiction to McGee's statement (p. 132): "Concordantly with their primary characteristic, the Seri have avoided ethnic and demotic union beyond the narrow limits of their own kindred; and even of these they seem to have cast out parts, annihilating the Guayma and Upanguayma, displacing and nearly destroying the Tepoka, and outlawing individuals and (apparently) small groups."